Risk of Indo-Pak War

2533. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item "Risk of Indo-Pak war highest since' 71:CIA" appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 8th February, 2002;

(b) if so, whether Government shares this perception of threat of a war;

(c) the steps taken/proposed to be taken to keep the country in state of defence preparedness; and

(d) whether Government will like to defuse the situation and if so, the details of the steps to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The Government is aware of the news-item, which is an assessment of a foreign intelligence agency.

To Meet any threat that may emerge, the Armed forces of India stand fully mobilised in a defensive posture, to counter infiltration into Indian territory and protect our borders.

(d) Government have, on numerous occasions, reiterated India's desire to establish peaceful, friendly and cooperative ties with Pakistan, and for this purpose expressed firm commitment to resuming the composite dialogue, but only when Pakistan ends its sponsorship of cross border terrorism and takes action on the list of 20 fugitives from law handed over to Pakistan on 31.12.2001.

International defence exhibition in New Delhi

†2534. SHRI P. K. MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any international defence exhibition was recently organized for the South Asian countries in New Delhi;

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.